

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1 - 4 (Canceled)

5. (Previously Amended) A method of preparing a negative active material having no particular shape for a lithium secondary battery, comprising the steps of:
dissolving a coal tar pitch or a petroleum pitch in an organic solvent to remove all organic-insoluble components therefrom and to obtain organic-soluble components;
heat-treating the organic-soluble components at a temperature in the range of 400 to 450 °C for 4 hours or more under an inert atmosphere to thereby produce at least 50 weight percent of mesophase particles having no particular shape based on the pitch;
coking the pitch including mesophase particles;
carbonizing the coked pitch;
pulverizing the carbonized pitch; and
graphitizing the pulverized pitch.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the inert atmosphere is a gaseous nitrogen or argon atmosphere.

7. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the mesophase particles are produced by 50 to 98 weight percent based on the pitch.

8. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the coking step is performed at a rising temperature up to 600 °C under an inert atmosphere.